

The fun and fundamentals

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Over the past few months, home and abroad, my diary records that I have visited over 250 classrooms in primary, special, secondary and all-through schools. Ever an energizing professional pleasure, what are the constituent features of sparkling classrooms?

What do I see as the fun and fundamentals of that great double act which is teaching and learning?

- ✓ The journey to the classroom is a positive experience.
- ✓ Warm relationships, humour and clear expectations shape the classroom ethos and values.
- ✓ Teachers know and enthuse about their subject, and know their children as individuals.
- ✓ The classroom walls and ceiling promote the subject and children's high quality work.
- ✓ Well prepared resources mean that teaching and learning flow.
- ✓ Everyone shares the story of the lesson.
- ✓ Time is skilfully orchestrated; interventions are carefully judged.
- ✓ 'Learning prompts' (eg. keywords and photos) enhance the learning experience.
- ✓ Individual, pair, group and whole-class activities serve a purpose.
- ✓ Children are practised in independent study skills, and self and peer review.

- ✓ Homework is fit for purpose; 'academic' and 'applied' learning are in balance.
- ✓ Systems of marking and assessment track children's progress and show them how to move forward.
- ✓ Skilful, probing questioning permeates.
- ✓ Music, video, internet clips bring laughter and diversion.
- ✓ Digression is treasured. Praise is given when earned.
- ✓ Evaluation of lessons by children is valued and acted upon.

With warm thanks to the many teachers who have invited me to join their everyday classrooms.

Roy Blatchford's latest title is [*The A – Z of Good Governance*](#)